

**TO THE FAITHFUL  
AND  
ALL MEN AND WOMEN OF GOOD WILL  
By Most Reverend Gabriel Malzaire**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Once again we are preparing to exercise one of the greatest blessings we have as a free and democratic society. I speak of the right and responsibility to vote for the men and women who will govern our nation for the next five years. One only has to look around the world to see how fortunate we are in Dominica to exercise this right and responsibility. We must value and preserve it with great respect and dignity.

For this reason, as your Chief Shepherd, I am appealing to all the Catholic faithful and all citizens of our beloved country Dominica, to conduct yourselves with respect and reverence for each other at all times during the campaign that precedes General Elections.

When I endorsed the Election Code on behalf of the Roman Catholic Community in Dominica, I did so with full confidence that you, my brothers and sisters, would uphold the tenets of the Code. While many of you are doing so, it has been brought to my attention that there have been instances of behaviour that are in clear violation of the Code. These need to be addressed.

I am particularly concerned about the instances in which Political Parties and individuals are held up for ridicule, become the object of lies, half-truths and character assassination. It is sad that men and women in this Christian nation allow themselves to stoop to such degrading level of conduct.

I want to remind you, brothers and sisters, that, while those strategies may stimulate the masses at Political Rallies, they are unchristian and should be denounced by all men and women of good will.

It is wrong to lie about anyone. It is wrong to tarnish the good name of anyone. It is wrong to rob another of his/her reputation. It is wrong to make public spectacle of the weaknesses, limitations or shortcomings of another simply to gain political advantage over them. It is wrong to seek to control the voting choice of those in need through bribery.

I call upon all the Faithful and all citizens of the Commonwealth of Dominica to be mindful of your responsibility to uphold the dignity and right of everyone to have their own political convictions, to subscribe to the political party of their choice, and to vote in good conscience for the candidate of his/her choice. It is their sacred right.

However, it is imperative that the candidates who present themselves for leadership be scrutinized by the electorate. Your choice, therefore, should be based on:

1. Whether those candidates will work for the common good of our people;

2. Whether they subscribe to the principles of democracy as enshrined in the law of the land;
3. Whether they are known to be free from involvement in unethical practices that would compromise Christian (human) values and be in violation of the law of the land;
4. Whether they can provide the kind of leadership that our nation needs in this twenty-first century; and
5. Whether they are capable of representing the common interest.

I wish again to emphasize that these criteria should be used for a closer scrutiny of the candidates presenting themselves for leadership in public office.

In this year dedicated to Jesus in the Eucharist, let us pray that we, as Catholics, make the Eucharist the source and summit of our unity as a nation. Let us use the graces received from our many celebrations of the Eucharist to strengthen us in our efforts to make Dominica truly the Land of the Lord.

Finally, I ask God's blessings upon all the men and women who present themselves to you for your vote at the upcoming General Elections. May God help them to present themselves to you with dignity, integrity and concern for the common good of the country.

God bless you all!